



National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior

The background image is a scenic view of the New River Gorge National River. It shows a wide river flowing through a lush green valley. In the foreground, there are dense green bushes and a small stream. The middle ground features a large island of trees in the river. The background consists of rolling green hills and mountains under a hazy sky.

# **New River Gorge National River General Management Plan**

**Interests and Concerns  
March 2006**





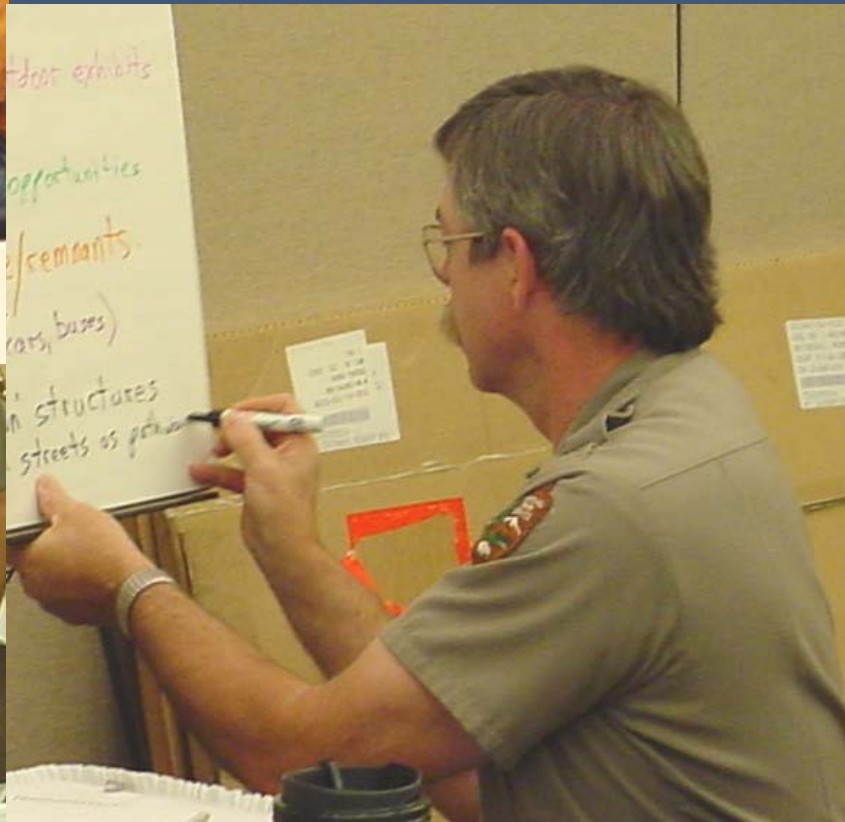
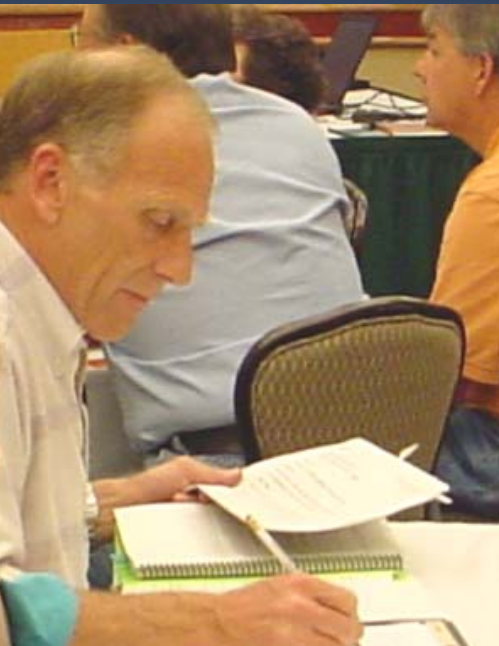
## Next Step in Preparing the Plan

1. Identifying Issues to be Addressed in the Plan (**Scoping**)
2. Creating a Vision for the Future of the Park





## NPS has Been Working on Issues and Visioning







# Now We'd Like Your Thoughts about the Issues and the Vision for the Future





**At our March 2006 Public Meetings we asked you:**

**“What are the issues that should be considered in the General Management Plan for the park?”**

**“What are your ideas for the future of the park?”**

**The following slides summarize what you told us...**







# What Happened at the March Public Meetings

## What's Going on With What's Most Important at the Park?

- the issues that you feel should be considered in the GMP







# What's Going on with What's Most Important? – the Issues







# The River and Its Resources – GMP Issues

## Water Quality

- pollutants entering the New River and its tributaries upstream of the park cause poor water quality conditions in the park
- park visitors contribute wastewater flows to the river that exacerbate already existing poor water quality conditions





# The River and Its Resources – GMP Issues

## Experiencing the River and Its Resources

- many stories about the river and its resources – if told – would greatly enhance the visitor experience
- poor access to and through the park limits where visitors can go and how they can experience the river and its resources





## Geologic Features – GMP Issues

### Experiencing the Park's Geologic Features

- many stories about the park's geologic features – if told – would greatly enhance the visitor experience
- poor access to and through the park limits where visitors can go and how they can experience the park's geologic features







# The Park's Forest – GMP Issues

## Threats to Forest and Wildlife

- the park's forest is threatened by air pollution, exotic pests, fragmentation, and non-native species
- the park's wildlife is threatened by forest fragmentation, new development, deer, and non-native species
- some traditional subsistence lifestyle uses threaten resources





## Outstanding Historic Places – GMP Issues

### Threats to Outstanding Historic Places/ Visitor Experience and Access

- natural deterioration, vandalism, lack of maintenance, weather, and/or lack of occupancy threaten loss of many of the park's remaining cultural resources
- poor roads and trails restrict or prohibit access to many cultural resources
- important stories about the region's cultural heritage are not being told and are in danger of being lost







## Dramatic Views – GMP Issues

### Threats to Scenic Character/Visitor Experience and Access

- new development within the Gorge and on the rim threatens the scenic character of the park's viewshed
- disagreement exists regarding the vantage points from which the viewshed should be defined
- many scenic viewpoints in the park are currently not accessible

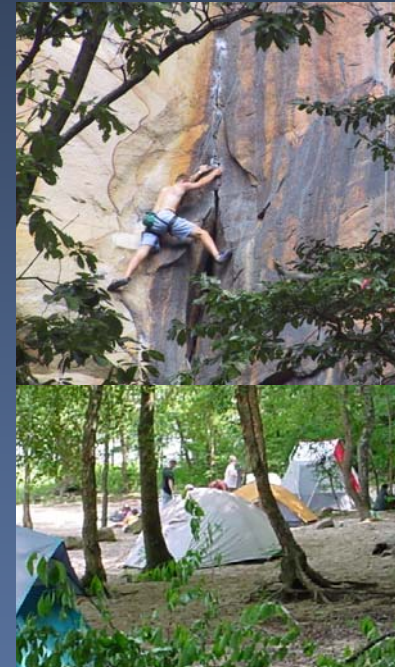




# Exceptional Opportunities for Visitors – GMP Issues

## Visitor Experience and Visitor Use

- many park visitors would like enhanced facilities and/or new day use areas for their activities developed in the park
- the small number of non-designated primitive campsites does not provide camping opportunities desired by many visitors
- facilities for different types of visitors are not balanced





## Park Access – GMP Issues

### Poor Access

- poor road access to and through the park limits where visitors can go and the experiences they can have
- the demand for parking exceeds capacity at many visitor use sites
- few developed trails are available
- active railroads are barriers to accessing the river





# Issues and Concerns Summarized in Newsletter 1

## Major Issues and Concerns Most Frequently Expressed by the Public during General Management Plan Public Involvement Activities

### Park Access (roads, parking, trails)

- poor road access to and through the park limits where visitors can go and the experiences they can have
- roads are subject to damage and are expensive to maintain
- closure of Glade Creek Road has eliminated access to a major visitor use area used by many types of visitors
- the demand for parking exceeds capacity at many visitor use sites (particularly at river access)
- few developed trails are available for hiking, biking and riding
- active railroads are barriers to accessing the river

### Visitor Facilities

- many park visitors would like enhanced facilities and/or new day use areas for their activities developed in the park
- facilities for different types of visitors are not balanced
- the small number of non-designated primitive campsites does not provide camping opportunities desired by many visitors
- non-designated primitive camping can lead to resource degradation and visitor conflicts
- comfort stations are not available in many visitor use areas
- handicapped visitors would like better access to the park

### Visitor Experience, Visitor Use, Visitor Orientation

- many stories about the park's cultural and natural resources – if told – would greatly enhance the visitor experience
- visitor crowding is occurring in some areas of the park
- traditional use in the park desired by some and not others – opportunities for hunting elsewhere are diminishing
- new recreation activities may be inappropriate in a national park
- ATV use is a desired use by some but is not legal in the park
- visitors find it difficult to find their way to and around the park
- visitors frequently do not know when they are in the park

### Natural Resources

- pollutants entering the New River and its tributaries upstream of the park cause poor water quality conditions in the park
- park visitors contribute wastewater flows to the river that exacerbate already existing poor water quality conditions
- the park's forest is threatened by air pollution, exotic pests, fragmentation, and non-native species
- the park's wildlife is threatened by forest fragmentation, new development, deer, and

### non-native predators

- some traditional subsistence lifestyle uses threaten resources

### Cultural Resources

- natural deterioration, vandalism, lack of maintenance, weather, and/or lack of occupancy threaten loss of many of the park's remaining cultural resources
- management plans are needed for the park's cultural resources
- poor access restricts or prohibits access to many cultural resources in the park
- important stories about the region's cultural heritage are not being told and are in danger of being lost
- archeological resources in the park are not documented

### Scenic Resources

- new development within the gorge and on the rim threatens the scenic character of the park's viewshed
- disagreement exists regarding the definition of the park's viewshed
- many scenic viewpoints in the park are currently not accessible
- air pollution, dust, fire, traffic, and wood-burning threaten the park's natural visibility
- non-native plants, road and bridge construction, and changes to the cultural landscape also threaten the park's scenic character

### Land Use

- the recent dramatic increase in proposed residential development within and adjacent to the park has the potential to adversely affect park resources and visitor experience
- other private investment inside the park that could adversely affect the park includes new gas well development, utility construction, and logging
- local land use policies and regulations do not adequately protect park resources from the impacts of new development
- active railroads constrain visitor access to the river

### Park Boundary and Land Protection

- the park boundary does not protect significant natural and scenic resources from the potential adverse effects of adjacent land development and development within the park's viewshed
- the park boundary needed to protect its scenic resources varies depending upon how the park's viewshed is defined – the viewshed can be defined from many different vantage points
- continued private ownership of inholdings within the park has the potential to expose park resources and the visitor experience to adverse effects

### What are the most important issues that should be considered in the GMP?

In small facilitated group discussions – during the second round of GMP public meetings – the public answered this question.

Water quality emerged as the single most important issue identified by the public. This is the only issue that all nine discussion groups ranked as one of the top three issues to be considered in the GMP.

Three additional issues ranked among the top three most important issues identified by the discussion groups:

- few developed trails are available for hiking, biking, and riding
- new residential development adjacent to and within the park boundaries could adversely affect park resources and the visitor experience
- the park boundary does not protect significant natural and scenic resources from the potential effect of new development

The need for additional camping facilities in the park – while not ranked among the most important issues – was noted by many meeting participants as an additional issue to be considered.



Clean water is essential to providing safe visitor experiences and to sustaining aquatic habitats

## Major Issues and Concerns Most Frequently Expressed (continued)

### Park Operations

- park maintenance is inherently difficult and costly due to the park's size, its linear configuration, and poor access
- littering and dumping is a problem in many areas of the park
- more patrols are needed to better enforce park regulations
- multiple emergency responders have jurisdiction in the park making emergency response coordination difficult
- disagreement exists regarding guide licensing requirements
- disagreement exists regarding user fees and reservations
- special use permit requests are frequently inappropriate

### Economic Development

- economic development goals can best be achieved through a cooperative effort by regional economic development entities
- a shared vision for the future of the region and a plan for marketing the region is needed to accomplish that vision
- the park should be recognized as an important economic generator in the region
- support from NPS is needed for economic development projects
- some people have suggested that a "great lodge" be developed as a regional attraction in or near the park

### Gateway Community Relations

- local community planning and land development policies directly and indirectly impact park resources and visitor experiences
- the benefits of the national park are not widely understood or appreciated
- people often do not understand that NRGNR is a national park and confuse the NPS with other public management agencies
- respect for the park and appropriate land stewardship is not always evident in the local community
- some feel that NPS has restricted their use of land in the park

### Partnerships

- the park currently has no "friends" group or pool of volunteers to help support its operations
- partnerships with state agencies – such as Hawks Nest State Park – could help accomplish mutual goals
- the park currently does not partner with the biking and hiking community on trail building within the park
- trail connections outside the park could be better accomplished by partnering with state agencies, trails organizations, private landowners, and adjacent communities



Development within the park's viewshed threatens to adversely affect the park's scenic character



River access facilities are often crowded



Cultural resources and stories of the region's cultural heritage are in danger of being lost



More cooperation between NPS and its gateway communities would benefit the park and its neighbors